

T H E  
*Salvation of Souls*

The Desire and Endeavour of every

Faithful Minister

O F T H E  
G O S P E L.

Being the substance of two Sermons from  
*Romans x. i.*

Preached before the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, at  
the admission of some Brethren to the work of  
the Ministry within their bounds; with some  
few Additions.

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By JOHN GOWDIE *Professor of Divinity in the  
University of Edinburgh.*

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EDINBURGH,  
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G. HAMILTON. 1736.

T H E

# Salutation of 2015

The President of the Institution of Engineers

President of the Institution of Engineers

OF THE

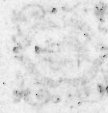
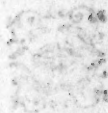
GOVERNMENT



During the last year, the Institution of Engineers has been very successful in its work.

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By John Gordon, Secretary of the Institution of Engineers.



LONDON: 1885.

Printed by T. and W. R. ...  
G. H. ...



To the Students of DIVINITY who have  
an eye to the holy Ministry. especially  
those who study under my care in the U-  
niversity of *Edinburgh*.

DEARLY BELOVED,

**T**HE following Discourse was delivered at two  
different times, before the Very Reverend  
Presbytery of *Edinburgh*: The first part of  
it in the High Church of *Edinburgh*, December 14.  
1732, at the admission of the Reverend Mess. George  
Logan, John Glen and Archibald Giblon, to the  
work of the Ministry in the city. The last of these  
never entred upon his work, but shortly after entred  
into the joy of his Lord. The last part was deli-  
vered before the Presbytery in the West-Kirk, Fe-  
bruary 15. 1733, at the admission of the Reverend  
Mr. James Dawson to the work of the Ministry in  
that parish: Who, after he had for some time la-  
boured in his Master's work there under several dis-  
couragements, was by his holy and wise providence  
called to that blessed place where the weary are at  
rest.

The station wherein the providence of God has  
placed me, is the only apology I can make for this  
application to you. Though I was not in the same  
station when I composed these sermons, yet I cannot  
say, but in composing them I had an eye to your pro-  
fit: and, now that they come abroad into the world,  
I address them to you.

I can sincerely say, that my heart's desire and  
prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved,

and be blessed instruments of saving others. And, in order to this, study to have a just sense of the worth of souls upon your spirits, a sincere concern for the salvation of your own souls; for he that is not concerned for his own salvation, will never be duly concerned for the salvation of others. Study a saving acquaintance with the grace of God which you may be called to preach to others, lest while you preach the gospel to others, ye your selves be cast-aways.

And seeing you live in an evil world, where many eyes are upon you, many waiting for your halting, and ready to reproach you even without just ground, see that you walk circumspectly. Set God always before you, and study a holy and unblameable walk before him, that those who are disposed to calumniate you, may be ashamed when they behold your godly conversation.

I recommend you to God, and the word of his grace, That he may guide you by his good Spirit in the ways of truth and holiness, make you blessed instruments of his glory, and good to souls, and at last make you eternally blessed in the enjoyment of himself, shall ever be the earnest prayer of

Your faithful Monitor,

and sincere Well-wisher,

JOHN GOWDIE.



The salvation of Souls the desire and  
endeavour of every faithful Mini-  
ster of the Gospel.

R O M. x. i.

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for  
Israel is, that they might be saved.*

**T**HE Apostle, being to treat of the re-  
jecting of the *Jews* for their infidelity,  
and the calling of the Gentiles to par-  
take of the privileges of the gospel;  
lest what he was to say might be look'd on as  
flowing either from want of love and regard to-  
ward his countrymen, or from spleen and ill-will  
against them, in the beginning of the ninth cha-  
pter he expresses himself in very strong terms con-  
cerning his sincere affection toward his brethren,  
his kinsmen according to the flesh. *Ver. 1, 2, 3.*  
*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience al-  
so bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have  
great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.  
For I could wish that my self were accursed from  
Christ,*



*Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh.* In my text he repeats the same thing, tho' in softer terms, and protests his fervent desire of the salvation of *Israel*: *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

He was now writing to the Christians at *Rome*. Many of them might be his brethren according to the flesh, as being *Jews*; and all of them were his brethren by grace, as being Christians, born of the same heavenly Father, God, and the same incorruptible seed, the word of God: and thereby being partakers of the same divine nature, having the same elder brother, Christ, and being heirs of the same heavenly inheritance; his heart's desire and prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved, not only from that temporal destruction which was coming on their city and nation, and did in a little time after overtake them, for their manifold and hainous sins against God, which cried aloud to heaven for vengeance, especially for that great sin of rejecting the *Messiah*; but from that eternal destruction which will be the portion of all impenitent sinners, that finally reject the grace of Christ declared in the gospel.

That they might be saved, was the desire of his heart, and his prayer to God: *My heart's desire.* The words in the Greek are, *Εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας*. The expression is strong, and very significant. *Chrysostom* explains it, in his 17th homily on the Epistle to the *Romans*, by *Σφοδρὰ ἐπιθυμία*; and *Theophylact*, *Εὐδοκία, τὴν ἐσιν, ἢ θέλοντός με, καὶ ἡ σφοδρὰ ἐπιθυμία, My will and earnest desire.* It was the pleasure and delight of his soul to promote the

the salvation of his countrymen. And because all his wishes, all his endeavours would be fruitless, and of no effect, without the aids of divine grace, therefore it was also his prayer to God. For this he bowed his knee, and made humble supplication, that God would take the vail of ignorance off their eyes, and cure the hardness of their hearts, remove the prejudices they laboured under, and bring them to the acknowledgment of Christ as the promised *Messiah* and only Saviour.

I consider *Paul* here as a Minister of the gospel and Ambassador for Christ, one to whom this grace was given, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the world; and from the words I observe,

*That the saving of souls ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the Ministers of the gospel.*

Thus it was with the Apostle *Paul*; it was his heart's desire and prayer to God for *Israel*, that they might be saved: and thus it ought to be, and will be with every faithful Minister of the gospel. For this end *Paul*, though he was free from all men, yet he made himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more, 1 Cor. ix. 19, — 22. that he might gain them, not make gain of them; that he might gain them, not to himself as his peculiar disciples, but to Christ as their only Saviour and Lord. In a word, he became all things to all men, that by any means he might save some. The saving of their souls was the end of all his condescendence. So, chap. x. 33. *I please all men in all things*; that is, things that are lawful or indifferent. And his end in so doing

ing was not a self-end, for his own profit; but for the profit of many, that they might be saved. We must not commit the least sin, or omit any duty, for the pleasing of men; for if we thus please men, we shall not be the servants of God: but in things indifferent, we ought to yield to the weakness of men for their spiritual profit, that they may be saved. The saving souls, then, is the mark a Minister of the gospel ought to have in his eye, and the business he ought to prosecute with care and diligence. For this end *Paul* exhorts *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. to take heed unto himself and unto his doctrine, that in so doing he might both save himself and them that hear him.

In speaking to this doctrine I shall endeavour to shew:

1. What is meant by saving souls.
2. What Ministers may do, and ought to do, in order to save souls.
3. I shall offer some considerations, why this ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the Ministers of the gospel.
4. Make application.

I. *What is meant by saving souls:* 1. It is not only to bring men to the knowledge of the principles of religion, and to an outward profession of Christianity. These things are necessary, but not the all that is necessary, to save souls. Without knowledge, and the profession of Christianity, men cannot be saved: *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*, says the Prophet *Hosea*, in the name



*the desire of every faithful Minister.* 9

name of the Lord, *Hof. iv. 6.* And except we profess Christ before men, he will deny us before his heavenly Father : *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Men may have a great deal of knowledge; and yet perish eternally, if their knowledge be merely speculative; swimming in the head : If it do not sink into the heart, and transform the soul into the divine image ; if it do not engage men to practise the vertues of the Christian life, instead of tending to the salvation of their souls, it will only tend to aggravate their sin, and make their condemnation the more heavy : for if they had no knowledge of the principles and duties of Christianity, they would have no sin in comparison ; but, having this knowledge, they have no cloak for their sin. *If ye know these things, says our Saviour, happy are ye if ye do them, John xiii. 17.* not happy if we know them only, but if we practise according to our knowledge. As for an outward profession of Christianity, without the spirit and temper of that holy religion, and a practice conformable to its holy precepts, how vain a thing is it ! A form of godliness, without the life and power of it. If we be only hearers of the word, and not doers, we deceive our own souls. Our Saviour assures us, that not every one that saith unto him, *Lord, Lord,* shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they who do the will of his Father who is in heaven. Such as rest in an outward profession of Christianity, without an inward temper of mind, and an outward practice agreeable to it, are like the foolish virgins, who had lamps, but took no oil with  
B them ;

them; who, when the bridegroom came, had the door shut upon them, and were not allowed to enter in with him. So these have a lamp of profession, without the oil of grace in their vessels; and, when Christ comes, shall have heaven's gates shut upon them, and shall not be allowed to enter into the mansions of glory: for they only that do his commandments shall enter in through the gates into the city.

2. It is not engaging men in a party or faction in religion. The Pharisees were exceedingly zealous that way. They compassed sea and land to make one proselyte; they went to all the regions of their dispersion to gain one to their party. And when they had gained him, what had he gained? Nothing but loss: He was made two-fold more the child of hell than themselves; more opposite to the gospel and true religion. For, as *Justin Martyr* tells us, in his dialogue with *Trypho*, these proselytes did not only disbelieve the doctrine of Christ, but were much more blasphemous against him than the *Jews* themselves, endeavouring to kill and torment Christians wherever they could, that they might equal their masters.

These modern Pharisees of the Church of *Rome* have trodden in the steps of their predecessors. What pains and diligence do they use, to make proselytes to their implicate faith, as if it were saving souls! I wish it could not be said with any truth, that Protestants have also been guilty this way, and been more zealous to gain men to their particular opinions, than to gain them to God and godliness.

In

*the desire of every faithful Minister.* II

In the early times of Christianity, there were two powerful factions in the Church; one, for observing the Ceremonial law, and particularly the law of circumcision; the other, against observing. But the Apostle *Paul* tells us, that in Christ Jesus (that is, under the Christian dispensation) neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; faith that works by love, and keeping the commands of God. And indeed, engaging people in factions and parties in religion, is so far from promoting the salvation of their souls, that it has a very great tendency to obstruct it. It ordinarily begets in men a spirit of pride and self-conceit, of contempt and bitterness towards those that differ from them, contrary to that love and charity which is the distinguishing character of the religion of the blessed Jesus, and without which men in God's account are nothing. It ordinarily produces slander and evil-speaking, contrary to the express precepts of the gospel, *Speak evil of no man, Speak not evil one of another.* It sets mens tongues loose against one another; and an unbridled tongue is a sign of a vain religion, which can never save the soul.

I proceed now to shew *positively* what I mean by *saving souls*. I mean, then, delivering them from the wrath and just displeasure of their Creator, to which they are exposed by their sins; from all that misery that shall be the everlasting portion of impenitent sinners in another world: delivering them from the power and dominion of their lusts, unto which they are bond slaves by nature; from that enmity that is in their carnal minds against God and his laws, and from a course of dis-



obedience to his holy commands : and bringing them to a state of favour and friendship with God, unto a conformity to his image, and subjection to his laws ; bringing them to Christ, the author of eternal salvation, that they may be justified through his righteousness, sanctified by his spirit, and enabled to walk in a course of holy obedience to his laws, and imitation of his example : In a word, *turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ,* Acts xxvi. 18.

II. I come now to the second thing in my method, *To shew what Ministers may do, and ought to do, in order to promote the salvation of souls.* But, before I enter upon this, there are a few things I must premise.

I. Whatever was necessary in a way of merit, to purchase the salvation of souls, was done by Christ our blessed Redeemer. He is the author, and the only author, of eternal salvation to them that obey him. He is the propitiation for our sins ; and in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. It was he that was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. He it was that delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He has purchased that grace which alone can subdue our corruptions, sanctify our natures, and enable us to walk before God in newness of life. He has purchased for us the heavenly inheritance, and has opened to

us a new and living way into it, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.

2. It is the Holy Spirit that applies, and makes us partakers of that salvation which Christ hath purchased. It is he that begins a good work of grace in us, and carries it on to perfection. He works faith in us, and thereby unites us to Christ, our living and life-giving head, and makes us partakers of all the benefits of Christ's purchase. He awakens us out of our security, convinces us of our sin and misery, enlightens our dark understandings in the saving knowledge of Christ, as willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. It is he that subdues our stubborn wills, conquers our obstinacy, and persuades and enables us to receive Jesus Christ as our only Saviour and Lord, according to the terms of the gospel. It is by the powerful operation of his grace Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

3. The word is the ordinary mean that the Spirit makes use of in working a work of grace in the soul. By the law he convinces of sin and misery; by the gospel he enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ: He sets home the terrors of the law on conscience, to awaken us out of our security; and proposes the motives of the gospel, to persuade us to flee to Christ, our only city of refuge. The word is the incorruptible seed by which we are born again; and except we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is the mean by which we are built up in holiness and comfort, and are at last brought to the inheritance among them that are sanctified.

4. Mi-

4. Ministers are instruments in the hand of the Spirit, for applying the outward means of grace : wherefore they are called *labourers together with God*, 1 Cor. iii. 9. and *workers together with God*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. They are heralds, to publish and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, the terms of peace and reconciliation to a lost world ; and ambassadors for Christ, to perswade men to accept of these terms, lay down the weapons of their warfare, and be reconciled to God.

I come now to shew *what Ministers may do, and ought to do, in order to promote the salvation of souls.*

There are three ways how Ministers may promote the salvation of souls : by their Doctrine ; by their Practice ; by their Prayers.

*First*, By their *Doctrine*. Now, there are two things in our teaching we would carefully attend to, if we would promote the salvation of souls : 1. the matter ; 2. the manner.

As to the Matter of our teaching, there are some things we would study to impress the minds of the people with ; some things we would carefully caution them against, as dangerous rocks on which many souls have shipwreck'd, and perished eternally ; of which we must warn the people, setting up beacons as it were upon them, that they may be aware of them, and avoid them.

*First*, There are some points of great weight that we must study to impress a deep sense of upon the minds of the people. As, 1. We must study to impress the people with a deep sense of the worth of their souls, and beget in them a due concern for them. The small concern people  
show



show about their precious souls, is much to be lamented, and a plain evidence of the little sense they have of the worth of them. The children of men are generally cumbred about many things, but neglect the one thing necessary : They spend their money for that which is no bread, and their labour for that which satisfies not : All their care is about the body, where they shall lodge, what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and where-with they shall be clothed. But how little care is there about the soul ; either what its present state is, or what its future state shall be : what shall become of it when it goes out of this body, and where it shall take up its eternal lodging ; whether in the regions of light, where there is fulness of joy ; or in utter darkness, where there is nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth ! Sure, if men had a just sense of the worth of their souls, they would not be so little concerned about their state, either present or future. We must therefore study to make the people sensible of the true value of their precious souls, which they throw away for trifles ; that they are of a divine original, and an immortal nature ; that they are their principal part, which raises them above the brutes, to a dignity but a little lower than the angels ; that by them they are allied to these pure spirits, capable of conformity to God, and of being for ever happy in the eternal enjoyment of him, or miserable in being for ever shut out of his presence.

2. We must study deeply to impress on the minds of the people a sense of the vanity of the creature, and its utter insufficiency to afford them  
happi-

happiness; that God is the chief good, and that in him lyes their chief happiness. All men have naturally a keen thirst after happiness. It is the voice of nature, *Who will shew us any good?* But how grossly are they mistaken as to the nature of true happiness! how miserably bewildered as to the way that leads to it! We must therefore study to set the people right as to this matter; let them see that the creature is but vanity, yea vanity of vanities; that it is but a broken cistern, which can hold no water; that God is the fountain of living waters, the inexhaustible source whence all the streams of happiness flow; that the creature is neither suitable to the nature, nor commensurate to the duration of an immortal soul, but God is every way suitable to both: therefore we must endeavour to draw their affections off from the creature, towards God their proper center.

3. We must study to make deep impressions on their hearts, of their lost state by nature, through guilt and corruption. Till once people be sensible of this, they will never seek after a Saviour, nor have a just value for salvation. It is a great part of the cure of souls, to make them sensible of their disease: The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. We must therefore open to them their guilt; that they are transgressors of the law, and so obnoxious to the curse of it; that if God should mark their iniquities, they could not stand; that if he should enter into judgment with them, they could not be justified in his sight. We must open unto them the corruption of their natures, the blindness of their minds, the perverseness

aversion of their wills, the carnality of their affections, the hardness of their hearts, and the enmity that is in them to God and his law; their utter aversion to God and goodness, and the proneness of their natures to that which is evil. In a word, we must study to acquaint them with all the plagues of their hearts. Till once men be made sensible of these things, and deeply affected with them, they will never cry out, *What shall we do to be saved? Who shall deliver us from this body of sin and death?* Nothing else but a deep sense of guilt and corruption can give men a just notion of the worth of atoning blood and renewing grace. While men think themselves increased in goods, and standing in need of nothing, they will never come to Christ, and buy of him gold tried in the fire to enrich them, white raiment to clothe them, and eye-salve to anoint their eyes, that they may see. Whilst they are crying, *Peace, Peace*, to themselves, they will never betake themselves to Christ the peace-maker. We must therefore endeavour to awaken them out of their security, and make them sensible of their danger, by setting the terrors of God before them, and representing to them that wrath of God that is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and will infallibly come upon the children of disobedience; and that in order to their flying to Christ, who alone can deliver them from the wrath that is to come.

4. In order to promote the salvation of souls, we must acquaint them with the necessity of a saving change, both of their state and temper. First, Of their state: That their state by nature is a state



of guilt and condemnation ; *He that believeth not, is condemned already*, John iii. 18. That they are under the curse of God's law, which they have broken ; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. and while they continue in that state, they must infallibly be miserable : They must either be justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ, and then there is no condemnation to them ; or fall under the sentence of his justice for ever : for though God hath declared himself *the Lord, the Lord merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity*, yet he will by no means clear the guilty. And as there must be a change of their state, so also of the temper and disposition of their souls. It were but a poor salvation, to deliver men from the punishment of their sins, while they still continue under the power and dominion of them. We must therefore open unto them the necessity of conversion and regeneration ; that except they be converted and born again, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is as inconsistent with the purity of the divine nature to receive an unrenewed corrupt soul into heaven, as with his justice to receive a guilty. While guilty, we are unworthy of heaven, while corrupt, unmeet for it. Souls therefore must be renewed and purified, before they can enter within the gates of the new *Jerusalem*, where no unclean thing can enter : they must be partakers of the divine nature, before they can be admitted into fellowship with a holy God.

5. If we would promote the salvation of souls, we must direct the people to Christ, the author of  
eternal

eternal salvation. And, to engage and encourage them to come to him, we must let them know, That he is the only Saviour, neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved: he is the only Mediator between God and man; and no man can come to the Father, but by him: That as he is the only, so he is an all-sufficient Saviour; he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him: he has fulness of merit to purchase their pardon and peace with God; he has fulness of grace to sanctify and renew their natures, and so make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and to keep them by the power of it through faith unto salvation: That he is willing, as well as able to save them; for he has declared, that whoever comes to him, he will in no ways cast them out: he invites the weary and heavy laden to come to him, and has promised them rest unto their souls. We must therefore direct them to his atoning blood, as the only propitiation for sin; to his perfect righteousness, as that through which alone they can stand justified before the tribunal of a righteous God, and be accepted of him; to his powerful grace, which alone can subdue their strong corruptions, sanctify their corrupt natures, and enable them to walk and persevere in a course of holy obedience, till at last they be presented before God, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish, and received into these mansions of glory where they shall dwell with God for evermore.

6. We must open unto them distinctly and plain-

ly the terms of salvation, Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We must show them, that repentance is not a few tears and a little sorrow for sin, nor forsaking a few grosser sins, while they continue in the love and practice of others ; but such a sense of its evil nature, and dismal consequences, (as, being dishonourable to God, contrary to his holy nature, a transgression of his holy law ; and the ruin of their precious souls, depriving them of their greatest happiness, and subjecting them to the greatest misery,) with an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, as engages the soul, with grief and sorrow for sin, and hatred and abhorrence of it, to turn from all sin to God, with firm purpose and resolution never again to return to it, but to cleave to God, and continue in a course of steady and sincere obedience to his laws, through the help of his grace, to the end of their lives.

We must show them, that faith is not a naked assent to the truths of the gospel, nor a confident reliance on Christ and his merits ; being perswaded that Christ is theirs, that they shall have life and salvation through him, and that whatever he did for the salvation of mankind, he did it for them, while their hearts continue impenitent, and their lives unreformed : but such an assent to that revelation that God has made concerning Christ, and the way of saving sinners by him, as engages the person assenting to act suitably to that revelation, by accepting and resting upon Christ, as he is offered to them in the gospel, as their Prophet, to teach them ; their Priest, to satisfy an offended God for them ; and their King, to subdue their  
corru-



corruptions, govern them by his word and Spirit, and defend them against all their spiritual enemies, till at last he confer eternal salvation on them. We must show them, that faith is a grace that purifies the heart, and is fruitful in good works; that faith that hath not works is dead, being alone; and that such a faith cannot save them. And as we must open the nature of these terms of salvation, so we must direct the people to that grace by which alone they can be enabled to perform them: shewing, that it is God who has promised to take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh; that Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance; that faith is not of themselves, it is the gift of God; and that therefore they are to seek these things of God by prayer.

7. We must carefully impress the minds of the people with a deep sence of the necessity of holiness and good works. We must represent to them, that without holiness none can see the Lord. We must always reckon it a faithful saying, and what we are always to affirm, That they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works. We must show them, that even the blood of Christ, though of infinite value and virtue, cannot save those whose hearts and lives are disconformed to the law of God, while they continue so: that they are only blessed who do God's commandments; they only have right to the tree of life; they only shall enter in through the gates into the city.

The doctrine of good works is disagreeable to some: they are ready to call it *legal preaching*. But it is *gospel preaching*, if Christ and his Apostles

stiles understood how to preach the gospel. Some want to have only the sweets of the gospel preached unto them; they cannot endure these doctrines that cross their corrupt appetites. But to such I must say, in the words of the Apostle Paul, Gal. vi. 7, 8. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* This doctrine then of the necessity of good works, we must preach, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. Were not holiness and good works the end of Christ's death? Did he not die, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works? Is not this the proper and native effect of his grace? Are we not created in Christ to good works, that we should walk in them? We must therefore teach the people what the grace of God that brings salvation teaches them; to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Nor must we rest in general recommendations of holiness, but descend to the particular vertues and graces of the Christian life, and exhort the people to add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: I might add humility, meekness, self-denial, abstractedness from a present world, and heavenly-mindedness. We must open the nature of these vertues, enforce them with  
all

all the most powerful motives, and direct them to the proper means whereby they may be helped to practise them : Especially we must set before them the example of the holy Jesus, and warmly recommend the imitation of it to them : that as they profess to abide in him, so they would walk even as he also walked ; that as they call him *Master* and *Lord*, so they would follow that example he has given them, and do as he has done ; for he hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps. We must press them to the conscientious practice of those duties that are incumbent on them in the stations and relations wherein God has placed them in the world ; as, husbands or wives, parents or children, masters or servants, subjects under a civil government, and members of a Christian Church. In the practice of these relative duties a great deal of the life and power of our holy religion lyes ; and without the practice of them no man can be a good Christian : without the practice of them Christians cannot adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, nor approve themselves as the servants of God and the disciples of the holy Jesus. We must above all things warmly recommend to them the prevailing love of God and their neighbour. These are the two great commandments of the law, in which the whole law is summ'd up, and on which hang all the law and the prophets. These will prove a fruitful principle of holy obedience, and will dispose men, nay constrain them to perform all those duties they owe either to God or their neighbour ; for love is the fulfilling of the law, and the whole law is fulfilled in this word, *Love*.

8. We



8. We must direct the people to the grace of God in Christ, by which alone they can be enabled to all holy obedience ; and to the merits of Christ, through which alone their obedience can be accepted. We must make them sensible of their weakness and insufficiency of themselves for any good word or work, and teach them the necessity of depending on the divine grace. We must show them, that without Christ they can do nothing ; and that except they abide in him, and he in them, they cannot bring forth fruit ; but if they abide in him, and he in them, they shall bring forth much fruit : for without him they can do nothing ; but through him strengthening them, they can do all. Yet we must carefully caution them against abusing this doctrine, of the necessity of the aids of divine grace, to sloth and laziness, as if they were to do nothing, and God were to do all. We must show them, that the only way to obtain further measures of grace, is to improve what they have received : *For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath*, Matth. xxv. 29. and exhort them to exert all their powers in working out their salvation, and give all diligence to make their calling and election sure.

9. We must press upon them the practice of holiness, and of the particular graces of the Christian life, by all those powerful motives that either reason or revelation affords. We must show them, that it tends to purify and refine their natures, to dignify them and make them honourable, more excellent than their neighbours ; that it will redound

dound to their profit and advantage both here and hereafter, for in keeping of God's commands there is an exceeding great reward, Psal. xix. 11. and godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

We must set before them the great and precious promises of the gospel, to excite their diligence in cleansing themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; the infinite love of God in Christ, to work upon their ingenuity, and excite their gratitude; the terrors of hell, to work upon their fear, telling them, that if they live after the flesh, they shall die; and the joys of heaven, to influence their hopes. We must exhort them to have respect to the recompence of reward, that they may not faint in their Christian course; by faith to look to that crown of glory which the righteous Judge shall bestow upon them at his appearance, to animate them with zeal and vigour in their Christian race. In a word, we must exhort them not to weary in well-doing, seeing in due time they shall reap if they faint not; but to be steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

These heads I have mentioned are the good old divinity, the great points of Christian doctrine delivered in the Scriptures of truth, taught by the first preachers of Christianity, and revived by our worthy Reformers; which I hope all the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* will ever adhere to: and God grant they may be handed down to the latest posterity. These things we ought deep-

ly to impress upon the minds of the people, if we would promote their eternal salvation. There are also some things we must caution them against in order to this : As,

1. Against entertaining prejudices against religion : that serious religion would be a damp to all their joys, an unreasonable restraint upon their liberty, and a hindrance to all their profits and advantages in a world ; fill them with sorrow and sadness, put an intolerable yoke on their necks, and reduce them to want, if not beggary. We must show them, That these are unreasonable prejudices, that have no foundation in the nature of the thing : That religion forbids them no pleasure but what has a deadly sting in it, tends to pain, yea everlasting torment : That religion affords the truest and most lasting joy, pleasures most refined, and suited to the nature of the soul ; *Wisdom's ways* (says the Wiseman) *are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace* : That religion delivers from the vilest slavery, and restores to the truest liberty ; for till the Son make us free from the tyrannous power of Satan and sin, we are never free indeed : That God's commands are not grievous ; on the contrary, Christ's yoke is easy, his burden light : That religion tends to our real profit and greatest advantage in its own nature and the wise providence of God, having the promises of the life that now is and that which is to come.

2. Against carnal security in an unconverted and impenitent state. Alas, how many of our hearers are sleeping soundly on the very brink of destruction ! Though there be nothing betwixt them and eternal ruin but the brittle thread of life, yet  
how



how secure are they ! They are crying, *Peace, Peace*, to themselves, while destruction is at hand. Out of compassion to their perishing souls, we must study to awaken them, and persuade them to flee from the wrath to come.

3. Against delaying their repentance. How many penitents in purpose are this day in the place of endless misery ! They designed to repent some time or other, but put it off from time to time. Thus it was with *Augustine*, as he tells us in his *Confessions*, when God was calling him to repent. When he could not refuse the reasonableness of the call, yet he put off and delayed complying with it : *Modo, ecce modo, sine paululum* ; Just now, just now, let me alone a little. But as he tells us, *Sed modo & modo non habebat modum, & sine paululum in longum ibat* ; His *just now, just now*, was never like to have an end, and his *let me alone a little* was like to continue for a long time. Thus it is with many, till at last death snatches them away, and they lose the opportunity for ever. O ! then, let us, by all the powerful motives we can, exhort men to set about repentance without delay ; to day to hearken to God's gracious call, and not harden their hearts against him. Above all things, let us caution them against trusting to a death-bed repentance. I will not say any thing against the validity of a death-bed repentance, and how far it may be accepted of God : I doubt not but even then God can make men monuments of the power of his sovereign grace, and the riches of his infinite mercy. But we must by all means show the people, what a desperate risk they run who put off their repentance till a dying hour ; how ex-

remely hazardous it is, seeing repentance then is rarely sincere, and can hardly ever be comfortable: Therefore let us earnestly exhort the people, as Rabbi *Eliezer* did his scholars, to repent the day before they die: who, being asked by them, If a man might know the day of his death? answered, Therefore let a man repent every day, because he knows not what day he shall die. So let us exhort the people to repent without delay, seeing every day may be their last day, and no man can tell what a day may bring forth.

4. (That I may only mention the heads of things) Let us caution them against trusting to their own works, as meritorious of justification and salvation: against trusting to an outward profession, without the inward power of godliness, and the outward fruits of it, holiness in all manner of conversation: against trusting to a barren and ineffectual faith, and presumptuous reliance on the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, while the heart is impenitent and the life unreformed: against allowing themselves in any known sin, or the neglect of any known duty; particularly, against those sins which are as it were peculiar to hypocritical and Pharisaical professors of religion, pride, conceit of themselves, despising others, saying, *Stand by, I am holier than thou*: against slander, detraction and evil-speaking; we must show them, that if any man among them seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, that man's religion is vain, and he deceives his own soul. We must caution them against placing religion in lesser matters, that are far removed from the vitals of true religion, while they neglect the weightier matters;

matters; or matters of doubtful disputation, which gender strifes rather than tend to edification in holiness: against blind zeal and a misinformed conscience, which many times hurry men on to actions inconsistent both with reason and religion: against the love of the world, and conformity to the vain and corrupt courses of it: In a word, against every thing that is contrary to, or inconsistent with the pure and undefiled religion of the holy Jesus in its life and power.

I proceed now to the second thing with respect to this first head, *viz.* the Manner of teaching, in order to promote this great end, the salvation of souls. And there are these three things I mention: The manner of our teaching must be plain, that our doctrine may be understood; methodical, that it may be remembred; grave, warm and affectionate, that it may make impressions on the hearts of those that hear us.

1. It must be plain, fitted to the capacities of the audience. As the matter of our teaching must not be obscure intricate questions, but the plain truths of God; so the manner of teaching must be with the greatest plainness, so as we may condescend to the capacities of the meanest of our hearers. We must avoid all abstract reasoning, which cannot well be understood even by a few, but is entirely lost on the generality. We must abstain from strange terms, and great swelling words of vanity; but plainness and simplicity of stile ought to run through all our discourses: else we but teach men to be ignorant, and instruct them how to know nothing; for it is impossible ever men can profit by what they do not understand.



stand. For this manner of teaching, we have the authority of one of the best of Preachers next to our blessed Saviour, the Apostle *Paul*: who, tho' he was of all the Apostles the most learned, and though he spoke with more tongues than any of them; yet declares, that in the Church he had rather speak five words with his understanding, that so he might teach others, than a thousand words in an unknown tongue: for he knew, that the design of preaching was not to amuse people with sounds, but to inform their judgments, to awaken their consciences, to reform their hearts and lives. And I am perswaded, there is not one Minister of the gospel, who is serious and faithful, who has the honour of Christ and the saving of souls at heart, but will be entirely of the Apostle's mind. A plain Scripture stile is most becoming the pulpit; nor do the truths of God ever appear in a better dress, than when delivered in words, not which man's wisdom teaches, but in which the Holy Ghost has delivered them to us. A florid stile may please upon the stage, and divert an audience; but does not at all become the pulpit.

2. Our teaching must be distinct and methodical, that the people may remember it. As teaching that is not understood can never be the mean of saving souls, so neither teaching that is not remembered: 1 Cor. xv. 2. *By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.* Therefore, as the people ought to give the more earnest heed to the things they hear, lest at any time they should let them slip or run out like a leaking vessel; so we ought to use all proper means to rivet our doctrine in their minds. One way to  
answer

answer this end, is to divide our discourses into distinct, proper and natural heads. Without such proper holds and stages, people will be at a vast loss to remember what is taught : therefore loose and general harangues, or in a concealed method, are by no means fit for a popular audience, or capable to be retained by the greatest part of hearers. Such soft, easy and gentle discourses, that flow smoothly, without being divided into distinct heads, may please and divert people for the time ; but they go in at the one ear and out at the other : it is almost impossible, that any thing of them should be remembred. Perhaps some few of better capacity may perceive the connexion, and discern the thread of the discourse, though finely spun ; but all is lost on the generality. To those that have most need of instruction, and perhaps desire most to be instructed, it is all amusement : little they can understand, and less they can remember.

3. As our teaching must be plain, that it may be understood ; distinct and methodical, that it may be remembred : so it ought to be grave, warm and affectionate, that it may make impression on the hearts of those that hear us. If we consider either the temper of our hearers, or the errand we come upon, we will clearly perceive, not only the decency and fitness, but the necessity of this. A great many of our hearers are labouring under a natural and contracted hardness and insensibility, that it is not easy to make the least impression upon them : or, if at any time some small impression be made, as was on *Felix* by the preaching of *Paul*, they have a woful and perverse

verse elasticity, as I may call it, in their temper; the impression quickly wears off, and they return to their former stupidity. Therefore we ought to study, by our grave, warm and affectionate way of preaching, to make the impression as deep and lasting as we can.

The errand we come upon is of the last moment. It is no small matter, to stand in the face of a congregation, and there deliver from the living God, in the name of our Redeemer, a message of salvation or damnation to perishing sinners. May such persons be treated with, and such a message delivered, in a cold and indifferent manner? Do not both call for warmth and zeal? It is not enough, that we inform the judgments, and enlighten the heads of our hearers: we must study to awaken their consciences, move their affections, and bias their wills. Our teaching therefore, especially in application, should be with such an affectionate *pathos*, as may show, that it comes from the heart of the speaker; that he speaks, because he believes; and so may tend to reach the hearts of the hearers. *Melchior Adam*, in the life of *Bucholzer*, says of that excellent man, that he never went into the pulpit, but he raised in his audience what affections he pleased. Of this way of preaching we have many examples in Scripture: I only mention one of the Apostle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* v. After he had laid down the doctrine *ver.* 18, 19. when he comes to application; *ver.* 20, 21. with what warmth of affection does he deliver it! with what strength of motive does he enforce it! Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead,  
be



*be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* When I speak of warmth of affection in teaching, I do not mean noise and violence of pronounciation, but such as is calm and sedate. Our discourses must not come from us like a violent torrent, that carries down all before it; but like a thick gentle shower, that sinks into the earth, and softens it.

I proceed now to the *second* way how Ministers may promote the salvation of souls, namely, by their *Practice*. For can the people believe what we speak, or be influenced by our preaching, if our practice be contradictory? The Apostle *James* says, *Be doers of the word, and not hearers only*: So, if we would be instruments in promoting the salvation of souls, let us be practisers of the word, and not preachers only; let us take heed that our example do not give the lie to our doctrine: else we lay stumbling-blocks before the people; and, instead of promoting their salvation, harden them in their sins, and may prove the occasion of their eternal ruin. A Bishop must be blameless, free from those vices he reproves in others, and tells them the danger of. Can the people believe us, when we tell them that the wages of sin is death, and that a chain of miseries both in this life and that to come will be the certain consequence of their continuing impenitently in sin, while they see us continuing in those very vices for which we tell them the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience? If then we would convince the people of the evil nature and bitter fruits of sin, let us forsake the practice of it our selves. Not

that Ministers can be free from failings; they are not angels, but men, exposed to the same temptations, and of like passions with others: but they ought to watch the more, and never allow themselves in the habitual and deliberate practice of any known vice; yea they ought to abstain from all appearance of evil. This will capacitate them to be reprovers of others, and show that they are in earnest when they do.

And as a Bishop must be blameless, so he must be a pattern of good works, an ensample to the flock, a pattern of every Christian virtue, that so he may recommend the practice of religion by his example as well as his doctrine. Therefore, if we would promote the salvation of the souls of the people, let us be examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity; let us convince them by our holy lives, and the practice of every Christian grace, that religion is a thing to be chosen, and of absolute necessity to happiness. We must not be like the Pharisees, that bind heavy burdens on other mens shoulders, but would not touch them themselves: we must take on the same yoke of Christ that we exhort them to take on; and thus convince them, that we press no duties upon them but what God has made necessary by his express command, and easy by the aids of his grace. We must not only point out holiness to them, as the way to happiness; but we must go before them in the path, that we may be able to speak to the people as the Apostle Paul, *Be ye followers of us, even as we also are of Christ; What ye have seen in us, do:* and appeal to them as he does 1 *Thess. ii. 10. Ye are wit-*

*witnesses; and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved our selves among you that believe.*

And so I come to the *third* way how Ministers may promote the salvation of souls, *viz.* by their *Prayers*. And, without this, all our other pains may prove to no purpose; we may labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought: for the success of all our labours depends upon the influence of the divine grace. Without this, all our preaching, all our practising will be but as water spilt upon the ground: Except the Lord build the house, the builders build in vain: *Paul* may plant, *Apollos* may water; God alone can give the increase. Now, this divine grace is only to be obtained by prayer. God has indeed promised his Holy Spirit; but it is to them that ask it: He gives grace freely; but it is to them that seek it. We must therefore be humble supplicants at the throne of grace in behalf of our people, That God would send down his Holy Spirit, to accompany the means of grace, and render them effectual for the salvation of their souls; that when we sow the good seed of his word, he would water it by the influences of his Spirit, that it may take deep root in the hearts of the hearers, and bring forth fruit abundantly in their lives, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

III. I now proceed to the third thing proposed, *To offer some considerations, why the salvation of souls ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the Ministers of the gospel.*

And the *first* consideration I offer, is, the value



and worth of souls. How precious and excellent is the soul! I may say of it as *Job* says of wisdom, *chap. xxviii. 15, — 19. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of the soul is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.* Man is the most excellent part of the lower creation. The soul, the most excellent part of man, its excellency does appear: 1. In its original. It is of divine descent. The body, however curiously wrought, is of the earth; it was formed out of the dust: but the soul is the immediate production of the Father of spirits: When God had formed man's body out of the dust, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. 2. In its spiritual nature. The body, as it is of the earth, so in its nature it is earthy, gross and compounded: but the soul is of a pure, simple and uncompounded nature. 3. In its immortal duration. As the body is of the earth, and earthy; so it must resolve into earth again, and be crumbled into its first principles in a little time: but the soul has no principles of corruption in it. It dies not with the body, but is of immortal and everlasting duration: The dust returns into the dust, as it was; but the spirit, unto God that gave it. 4. The excellency of the soul appears in the noble faculties and admirable powers wherewith it is endowed. How noble,  
and

and even angelical a power is that of understanding ! It receives and forms ideas, compares one with another, observes their agreeableness or disagreeableness : it can reason, infer, reflect, carry on a chain of thoughts with a clear connexion, and lay up a vast stock and treasure of knowledge ; it can discern betwixt truth and falsehood, good and evil, and direct the will in its choice. The will is another faculty of the soul, the principle of freedom ; without which we would be incapable of virtue or reward. It is like a Queen sitting on her throne, and swaying the sceptre of liberty in her hand ; with all the affections waiting and attending upon her. It can chuse or refuse, and, by a sort of sovereign empire, check and controul the most violent and impetuous inclinations of the sensitive appetite. The memory is the storehouse of knowledge, where the soul lays up its stock. The conscience, a self-reflecting principle ; whereby the soul can judge its own actions ; accuse or excuse, acquit or condemn itself, according as it has done good or evil. 5. Let us view the soul in its actings. How quick and nimble ! how vigorous and indefatigable ! how vast and comprehensive are its actings ! It can penetrate into the secrets of nature, and reach where the vulture's eye hath not seen : it can survey the whole system of created beings ; yea ascend above them, and contemplate him who is Being itself, and the glorious Author of all being. 6. If we consider the soul in its capacities, how incomparably excellent does it appear ! The body lives and moves in the lower region of the senses, that are common with the brutes, yea the worms that crawl on the earth ;  
but

but the soul is capable of conformity to God, and communion with him in grace and glory. It was at first formed after his image : and though his image was defaced by the fall, yet it is capable of having it again repaired and restored in it, and being for ever happy in the enjoyment of God ; they shall be made like him, and shall see him as he is. Lastly, Let us view the soul in its comparative excellency. The world, with all its pleasures, profits and grandeurs, how big does it look in the eyes of carnal men ! but, when laid in balance with the soul, it will appear lighter than vanity. Our Saviour, who well knew the worth of souls, compares them together, and declares that the gain of the whole world could not compensate the loss of the soul : *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* Matth. xvi. 26, intimating, that supposing the case, which never has existed or can exist, that a man should gain the whole world at the rate of losing his soul, instead of being a gainer, he loses by the bargain. Seeing then the soul is so inestimably precious, its worth and excellency so vastly great ; how ought this to excite our most earnest desires, and engage us to use our utmost endeavours, to prevent its eternal ruin, and promote its eternal salvation !

A second consideration, why the saving of souls ought to be the chief aim and the earnest endeavour of the Ministers of the gospel, is, that the salvation of souls is a thing well pleasing and acceptable to God. It was the subject of his counsels of grace from eternity ; there was a purpose of grace before the world began ; it is the end of  
all



all his dispensations of grace in time; he is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; he has sworn that he has no pleasure in the destruction of sinners, but would rather they should turn and live; he calls and invites to repentance; he is ready to receive the penitent upon their return, to shew mercy to them, and abundantly pardon them. Our blessed Saviour spoke three several parables, recorded *Luke* xv. and the scope of all the three is, to shew how acceptable and well pleasing to God the repentance and salvation of sinners is: There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. The great God himself rejoiceth therein, as it tends to advance the glory of his rich mercy and almighty grace, and promote the happiness of his reasonable creature. Now, seeing the salvation of souls is so acceptable and well pleasing to God our Master, ought it not to engage the most earnest desires and diligent endeavours of those who profess to be his servants?

*Thirdly,* This is the great end for which Christ came into the world, and of all he did and suffered while in it. He came to call sinners to repentance, to seek and save that which was lost. He came not into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. This is that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came to save sinners. For this end he came down from heaven, and tabernacled among men; he clothed himself with the rags of our humanity, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. For this end he made himself of no reputation; took on him the form of a servant;

vant; humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For this end, though he was the Lord of glory, he lived a mean and miserable life, and submitted to a shameful, painful and accursed death. If we have any love to Christ, let us testify it by studying to promote the great design of his incarnation, humiliation and death. He says to *Peter*, *Lovest thou me?* and as a testimony of his love to him, he bids him feed his sheep. What a rate did Christ value souls at! He thought them worth his blood and sufferings; and shall not we think them worth our labour and care?

*Fourthly*, Let us consider how unweariedly active all the enemies of souls are to ruin and destroy them. Their adversary the devil is still going about, either as a roaring lion seeking to devour them, or as a cunning serpent to deceive them: the world, with all its allurements, is ever ready to bewitch them: the flesh, that home-born enemy, to betray them; all conspiring to hinder and defeat their salvation, and promote their everlasting destruction. Shall then the Ministers of the gospel be unconcerned, slothful and negligent? Ought they not to use their most unwearied endeavours to prevent their ruin, and promote their everlasting happiness?

*Fifthly*, This is the great end and design of a gospel-ministry. For this end Christ, the Saviour of souls, when he ascended up on high, settled such an order of men in the Church; for the conversion of sinners, for the edification of saints: *for the perfecting of the saints in the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*, Ephes.

iv. 12.

iv. 12. by adding new members to it, and promoting the spiritual growth of those who are already united. For this end is the word of reconciliation committed unto them, that, as ambassadors for Christ, they might pray and beseech men to be reconciled unto God. Now, if this be the great end of our office, ought we not to pursue it with the greatest concern and diligence?

*Sixthly*, Let us consider the relation we stand in to souls, and the account we must make to God for them. We watch for souls as those that must give an account: we are watchmen for souls. As God says to *Ezekiel*, chap. iii. 17. so he says to every Minister of the gospel, *I have made thee a watchman*. Now, it is the watchman's duty, to be solicitously concerned for the preservation of that which is committed to his charge, to foresee any danger it may be exposed to, to give warning, and use all proper means to ward off and prevent the evil threatned: so Ministers of the gospel ought to be solicitous about the souls committed to their charge, observe the danger they are exposed to, and give them fair warning. Therefore they should not be negligent, slothful and unconcerned: but, as *Isidore of Pelusium* says, they should be all eye, seeing every thing, neglecting nothing that respects the weal or hurt of souls; and the rather, that they must give an account to God for them; what is become of the souls committed to their trust, whether any have perished eternally through their default, whether any of them have been converted and built up in their most holy faith by their ministry. If Ministers be negligent and give not warning, God will require



the blood of souls at their hand : if they give faithful warning, though the people perish, yet the Ministers have delivered their own souls.

*Seventhly*, (and I add no more) To excite us to a serious concern and zealous endeavour for the salvation of souls, let us consider the reward of it. The work is glorious, to save a soul from death ; the reward no less glorious. Such Ministers, when Christ the great Shepherd of the sheep shall appear, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away : Such as turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in heaven for ever and ever.

IV. I come now to *make some short application*. And, *First*, If the saving of souls ought to be the chief aim and desire, the earnest prayer and endeavour of the Ministers of the gospel ; then we may remember our faults this day. Surely it becomes us, whom God has honoured to be his ambassadors, to preach to perishing sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ, to beseech them in his stead to be reconciled to God, seriously to lay it to heart, and be deeply humbled in the sight of God for our manifold short-comings in this matter, that we have not had the saving of souls so much on our hearts and before our eyes, in our ministrations, as we ought. How oft has self mixed with our performances ! Have we never preached, rather to please our people, and gain applause from them, and a following after our selves ; than to profit them, and promote the salvation of their souls ? Have we never vented our own passions, and endeavoured to stir their passion, in matters that were far from having a tendency to promote their spiritual and eternal

ternal interests? Have we walked so unblameably and exemplarily before them as we ought? Has it been our care, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, that we might recommend it to them, not only by our preaching, but also by our practice; and convince them of the necessity of a holy life, not only by what we say, but also by what we do? Have our hearts been deeply affected with the miserable state of souls committed to our care? Have we been earnestly and fervently wrestling at the throne of grace for a blessing on our labours, That God would come in a day of his power, and, by the powerful influences of his grace, awaken secure sinners, convince and convert the obstinate, and build up saints in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation? Surely it becomes us to be deeply humbled in the sight of God on account of our manifold failings: it becomes us to lay our mouths in the dust, and cry out, *Guilt*y, before him: it becomes us to deprecate his displeasure, and cry, *Enter not into judgment with thy servants.*

*Secondly,* If we have sincerely desired and endeavoured the saving souls, (and, so far as we have, let us take comfort in it,) tho' our success has not been answerable to our wishes and endeavours; tho' we may have but too good reason to make complaint with the Prophet *Isaiak*, chap. liii. 1. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* tho' *Israel* be not gathered, our people be not converted, but fail of the grace of God we have preached unto them; tho' with sore hearts we may say, *We have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought:* yet our judgment is with the Lord,

Lord, and our work or reward with our God; he will not judge us according to the success, but according to the sincerity of our aims, and our diligence in our work.

*Lastly*, Let us all be exhorted to make the salvation of souls our chief aim and sincere endeavour; let it be our heart's desire and prayer to God for the people, that they may be saved; let us not study to gratify their humours, but to save their souls; let us please them for their good to edification. And, that thus we may do, let us endeavour to have on our spirits a deep sense of the worth of souls, and of the inestimable price that Christ paid for them; a tender compassion for perishing souls, and a just concern for the salvation of our own souls; for he that is not concerned for the salvation of his own soul, will never be duly concerned for the souls of others: let us study to have our hearts inflamed with love to God, love to Christ, and love to precious souls; to have a deep sense of the awful account we are to make to God for the souls committed to our charge. Under the powerful influence of these principles, let us set about our work in a dependence on divine assistance; let us travail in birth till Christ be formed in souls; let us study to promote their spiritual growth in all the virtues of the Christian life, till they finish their course with joy, and receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Thus we shall be a blessing to the people, and they a comfort to us, yea our crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. *And that thus it may be, may God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of Jesus.* AMEN. 1 JA 64